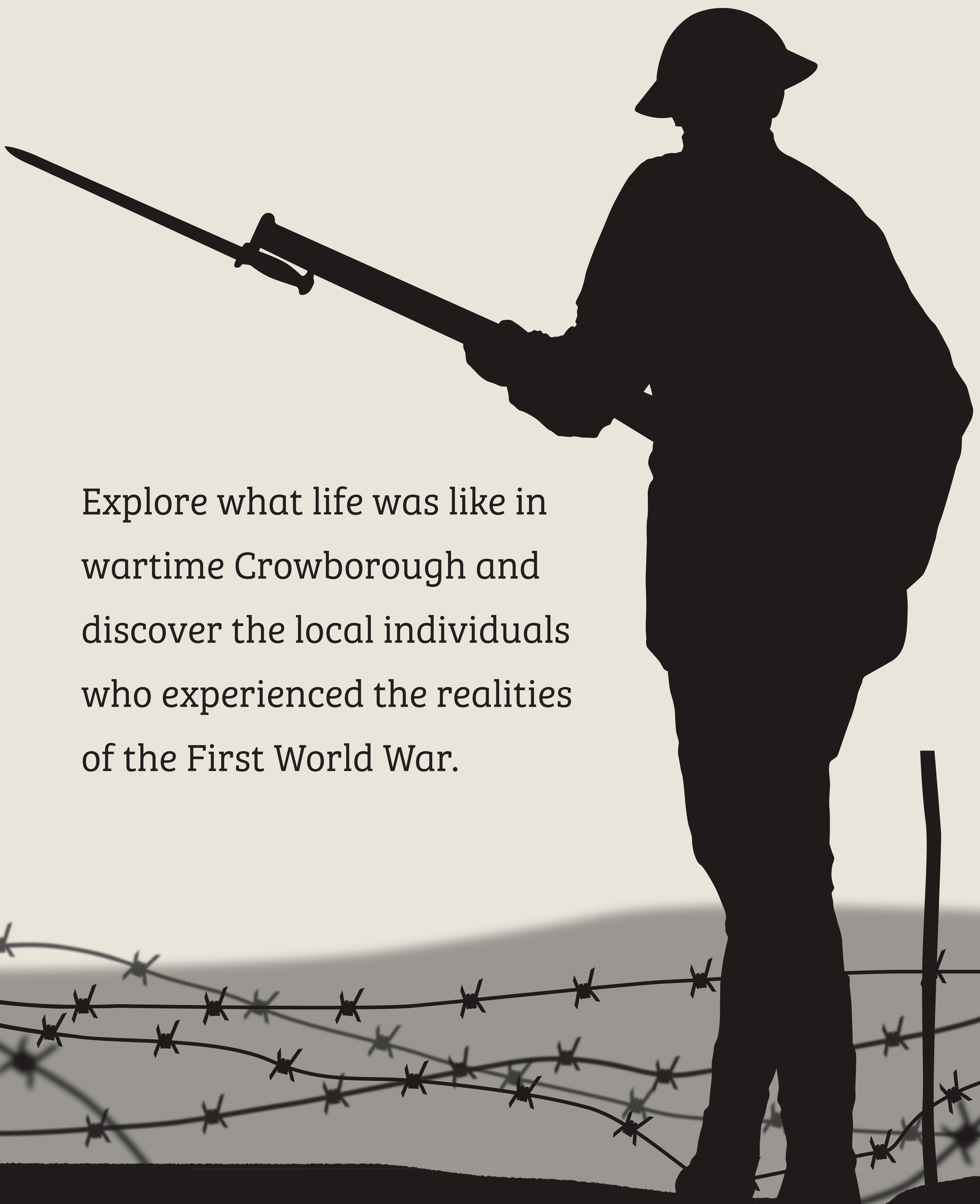


CROWBOROUGH'S WAR 1914/1918



Explore what life was like in wartime Crowborough and discover the local individuals who experienced the realities of the First World War.



FIRST WORLD WAR TIMELINE

WAR

Archduke Ferdinand Assassinated, Sarajevo **28 JUN 1914**
Britain declares war on Germany **4 AUG 1914**
Battle of Mons, Belgium **23 – 31 AUG 1914**
First Battle of Ypres, Belgium **20 OCT – 22 NOV 1914**



Battle of Verdun, France **21 FEB 1916**

Battle of Jutland, Near Denmark **30 MAY 1916**
Battle of Boar’s Head, France **30 JUN 1916**
Battle of the Somme, France **1 JUL – NOV 1916**
Tanks used for the first time **15 SEPT 1916**

America declares war on Germany **6 APR 1917**

The Battle of Passchendaele **31 JUL 1917**
Second Battle of Verdun **20 AUG 1917**
Mustard Gas used by the German Army **SEPT 1917**
on the Western Front

The Royal Air Force (RAF) is founded **1 APRIL 1918**

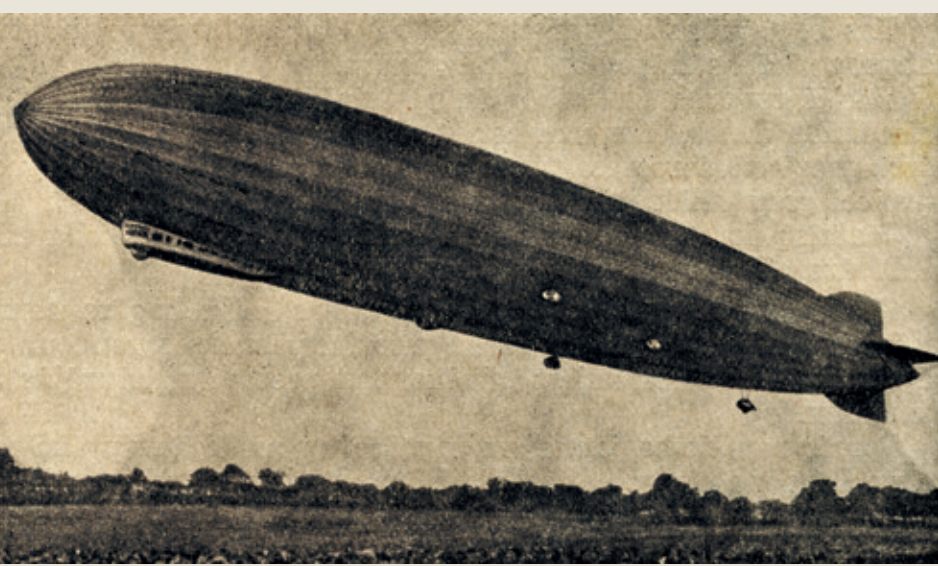
Battle of Amiens, France **8 AUG 1918**
Second Battle of the Somme **21 AUG 1918**
The Armistice is signed **11 NOV 1918**

The Treaty of Versailles is signed **28 JUNE 1919**



HOMEFRONT

17 NOV 1914 Crowborough’s Volunteer Training Corps receives official recognition.
FEB 1915 Walsh Manor VAD Hospital, Crowborough, admits its first patients
31 MAY 1915 First Zeppelin air raids on London



2 MAR 1916 Conscription Introduced in Britain for the first time

DEC 1916 Walsh Manor VAD Hospital closes
JAN 1917 The Women’s Land Army is established.

MAY 1917 Harecombe Manor, Southview Road, Crowborough becomes a VAD Hospital

JAN 1918 Rationing introduced in Britain
8 FEB 1918 Representation of the People Act passed – giving the vote to all men over 21, and women over 30 who owned property.



19 JULY 1919 Peace Day Celebrations in Britain

11 NOV 1919 Temporary Cenotaph Unveiled and the First Two Minutes Silence Held

15 AUG 1920 Crowborough War Memorial is unveiled
11 NOV 1920 Permanent First World War Memorial, the Cenotaph unveiled on Whitehall Street, London

JUN 1914
JUL 1914
AUG 1914
SEP 1914
OCT 1914
NOV 1914
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CROWBOROUGH 1914

In the late 19th Century, Crowborough's rolling hills, high elevation and surrounding forest were described by Estate Agents as "Scotland in Sussex". Dr Leeson Prince had promoted the area as a health resort for middle class Victorians, which had helped fuel a boom in middle class residents and visitors to the once small rural village. The population had also grown rapidly after the arrival of the railway, so that by 1914 Crowborough had a population of approximately 6000 people.

Before the war Crowborough was a successful holiday venue with numerous hotels and guest houses. The most impressive was the Beacon Hotel, which also provided a large amount of employment in the local area. The hotels supported the local economy by spending on local goods and services, and with the addition of the influx of visitors, the local economy could support numerous shops, and small family businesses. There were also a large number of farms, producing supplies of fruit, vegetables and livestock for the many hotels and guest houses.

When the War began, The Courier reported that the normal influx of visitors "naturally curtailed by the gravity of national affairs". Hotels also faced a sudden personnel shortage as foreign staff left to return to their native countries. In Crowborough some of the foreign waiters returned to their duties as they were unable to travel to their home countries.

On St John's Common, soldiers in the Territorial Forces attended their annual summer training camps. It was not unusual for soldiers to occupy Crowborough during July and August. Often these camps attracted sight-seers from the many holiday visitors to the town, eager to watch the soldiers training.

When war was declared on the 4th August 1914, nobody in Britain was prepared for what was to come over the next four years. Many believed the war would be over in a matter of days, and surely by Christmas. War was romantic. War was an adventure. War was colourful flags and smart uniforms. The horrors of the battlefields and the staggering loss of life and wounded men, were yet to enter the country's collective imagination.



1/8th City of London Battalion of the London Regiment arrived at Crowborough in September 1914.

Courtesy of Paul Adams



High Street, Crowborough c.1914.

Courtesy of Paul Adams



The Beacon Hotel, Crowborough

CROWBOROUGH'S HOME FRONT

Previous wars had happened on “foreign lands”. They did not affect the “ordinary” civilian in Britain. The First World War changed this forever. Housewives were encouraged to help “fight” the war by being economical in their use of food. Zeppelins, and later aeroplanes bombed civilians in their homes, people were encouraged to grow their own fruit and vegetables, and a forerunner of the Home Guard was established to provide defence against invasion. For the first time, the term “homefront” was coined to suggest those left at home were also fighting the war.

RATIONING AND FOOD SHORTAGES

At the time Britain was importing up to two thirds of her food supply, mainly from America and Canada. This meant merchant ships had to cross the Atlantic Ocean in order to deliver food, which until 1916 was relatively safe. However following Germany's decision to starve Britain into surrender with the introduction of unrestricted submarine warfare in 1917, merchant ships began to suffer regular losses. With other restrictions on imported food such as lamb from New Zealand and fishing restrictions coupled with bad weather, Britain found itself suffering from severe food shortages.

To combat these shortages, as well as recommending households buy local produce, the government encouraged people to use any spare land they could find to grow their own fruit and vegetables. Crowborough was already well placed to deal with these food shortages, as it was an area of market gardens, and small mixed farms producing a range of crops and livestock. Many residents also already grew their own fruit and vegetables or kept hens and other livestock.

For the first time in British history, in January 1918 the government introduced Rationing. Sugar was the first to be rationed and by April was joined by meat, butter, cheese and margarine. Food prices had also risen dramatically due to the shortages, forcing the government to issue price controls on staple foods. After February 1918 it was impossible to buy butter, margarine or meat in the South East without a Ration Card. By April they were forced to register for bacon as well.

Although Crowborough coped well with the food shortages, it was badly affected by the coal shortages. In 1917, the Parish minutes recorded the council's anxiety of securing a suitable supply of coal for the working classes, as there had been difficult times the previous winter.



A photo of the wedding of Kate Bailey and Albert Goldsmith. The back row of the photograph are soldiers from Crowborough Camp. They did not know the happy couple, but were welcomed in to join the wedding party.

Courtesy of Denise King.



Soldiers at The Broadway.

Courtesy of Paul Adams

ROADS

Throughout the war years the state of Crowborough's roads were the subject of many complaints, and multiple columns in The Courier. With the creation of Crowborough Camp, the increased military traffic, with its heavy vehicles, caused a huge amount of wear and tear to the local roads. Large amounts of food and equipment were regularly needed by the troops at the Camp, and after the Canadian Machine Gun School was established, large amounts of ammunition were also transported by road to the Camp.

TOURISM

Despite the war, the tourist industry in Britain continued to flourish. With continental destinations now unsafe, more civilians holidayed at home. Crowborough had enjoyed a successful tourist industry before the war, and reduced tourism continued during the war years. In December 1917 it was reported that although the visitors to Crowborough were not as numerous as the previous year, the Crest Hotel was fully booked, and the Beacon Hotel welcomed many relatives and friends of the Officers living at Crowborough Camp.

SOLDIERS

With the regular military summer camps on St Johns Common, Crowborough was used to seeing soldiers in the town. However with the creation of Crowborough Camp and the thousands of troops who passed through it throughout the war, and some who were billeted in the town itself, as well as the VAD Hospitals nursing wounded soldiers, troops became a regular feature of the town. Many local organisations held fundraising events to provide comforts for the troops at the Camp and in the hospitals, they put on social events such as concerts and lectures, and opened up their homes to offer baths and other amenities.



A soldier on horseback outside Frances Goodacre's tobacconist shop on the corner of Croft Road.

Courtesy of Paul Adams



A group of soldiers spending time at Crowborough Cross.

Courtesy of Paul Adams

D.O.R.A AND REG CARTER

On the 8th August 1914 the government passed the Defence of the Realm Act or DORA. This act gave the government the power to control virtually every aspect of civilian life, including what was published in the press, the power to imprison people without trial who were considered a threat to Britain, and to commandeer economic resources for the war effort. The act was amended six times during the war, reflecting the evolving challenges of wartime Britain.

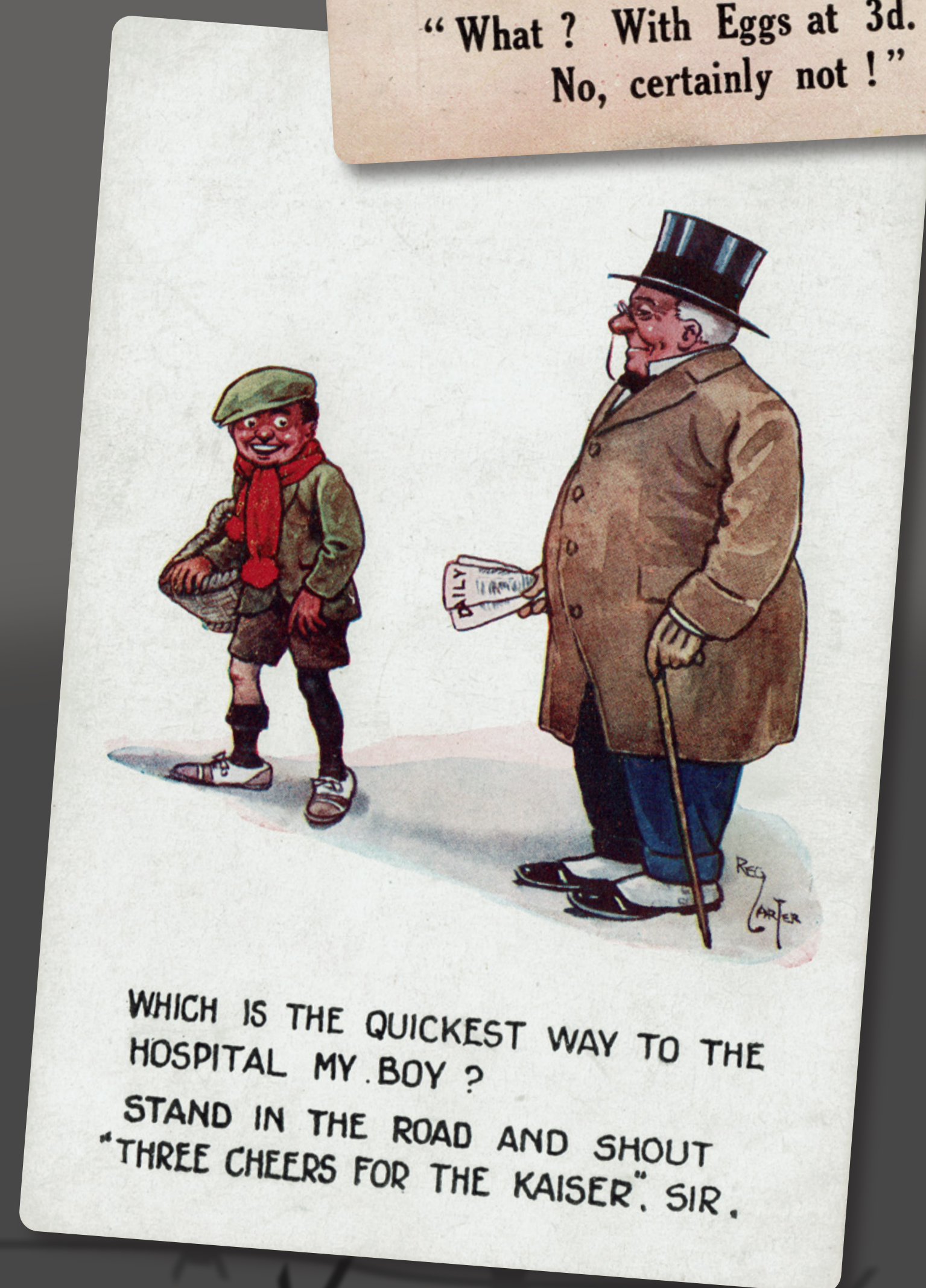
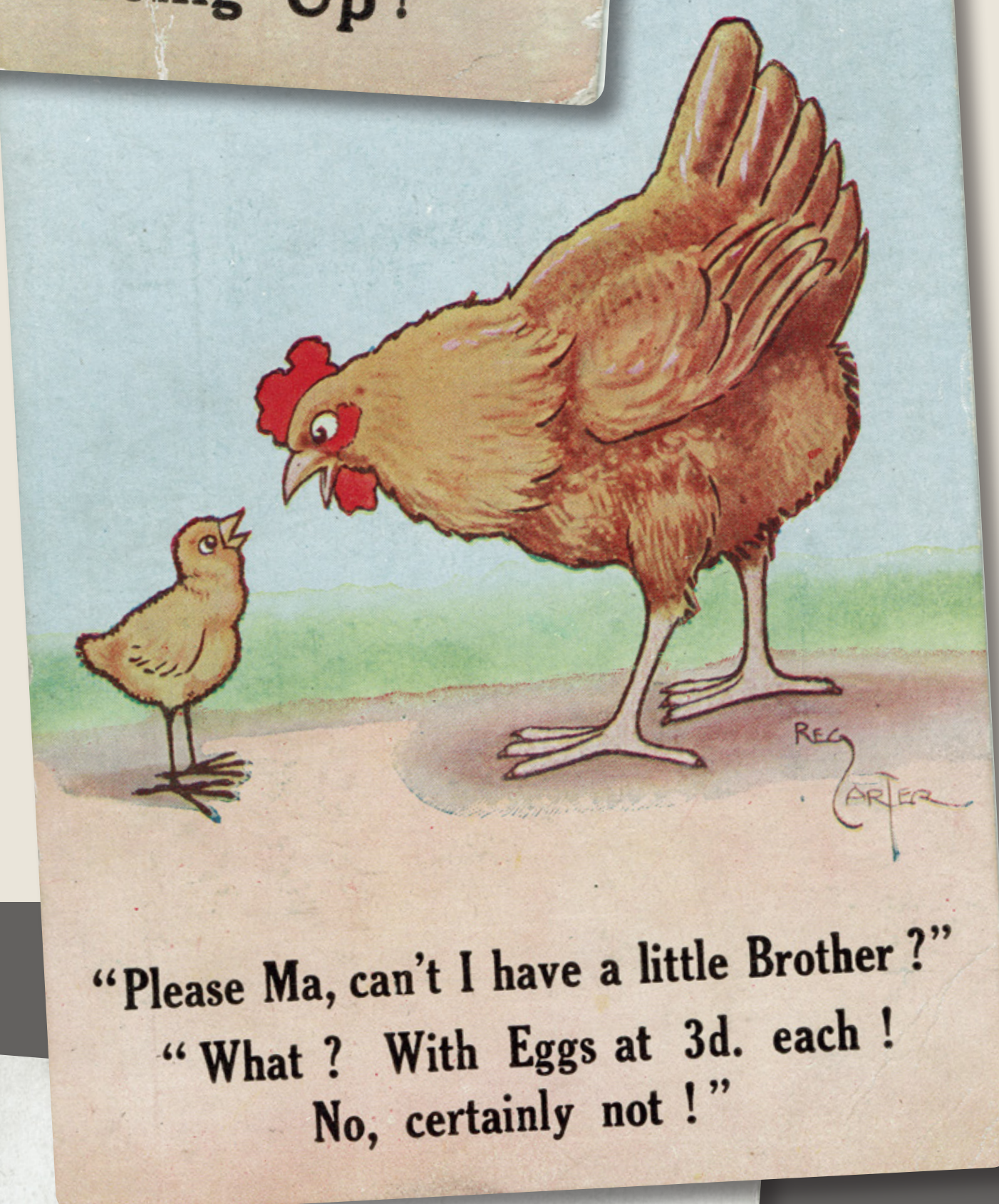
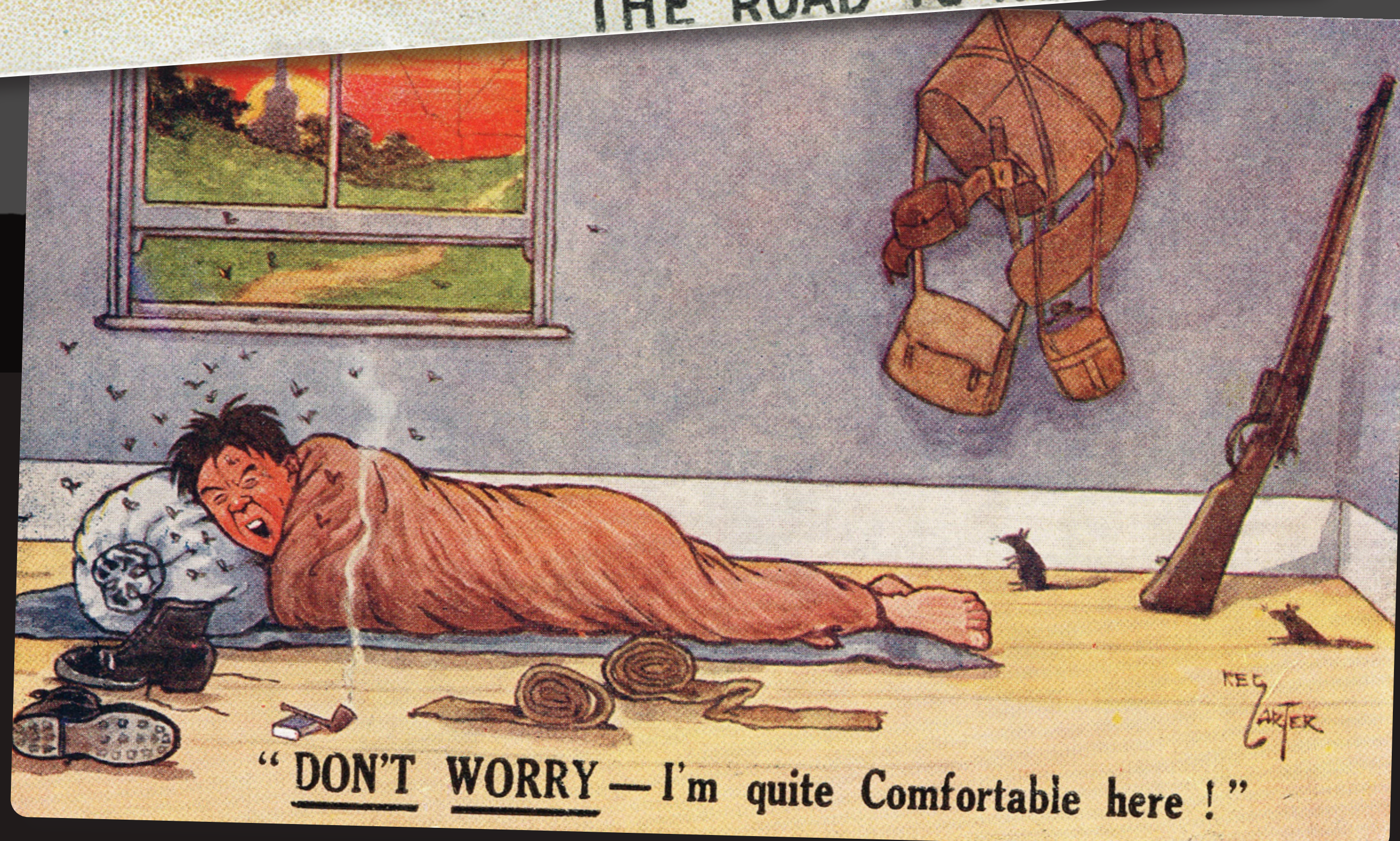
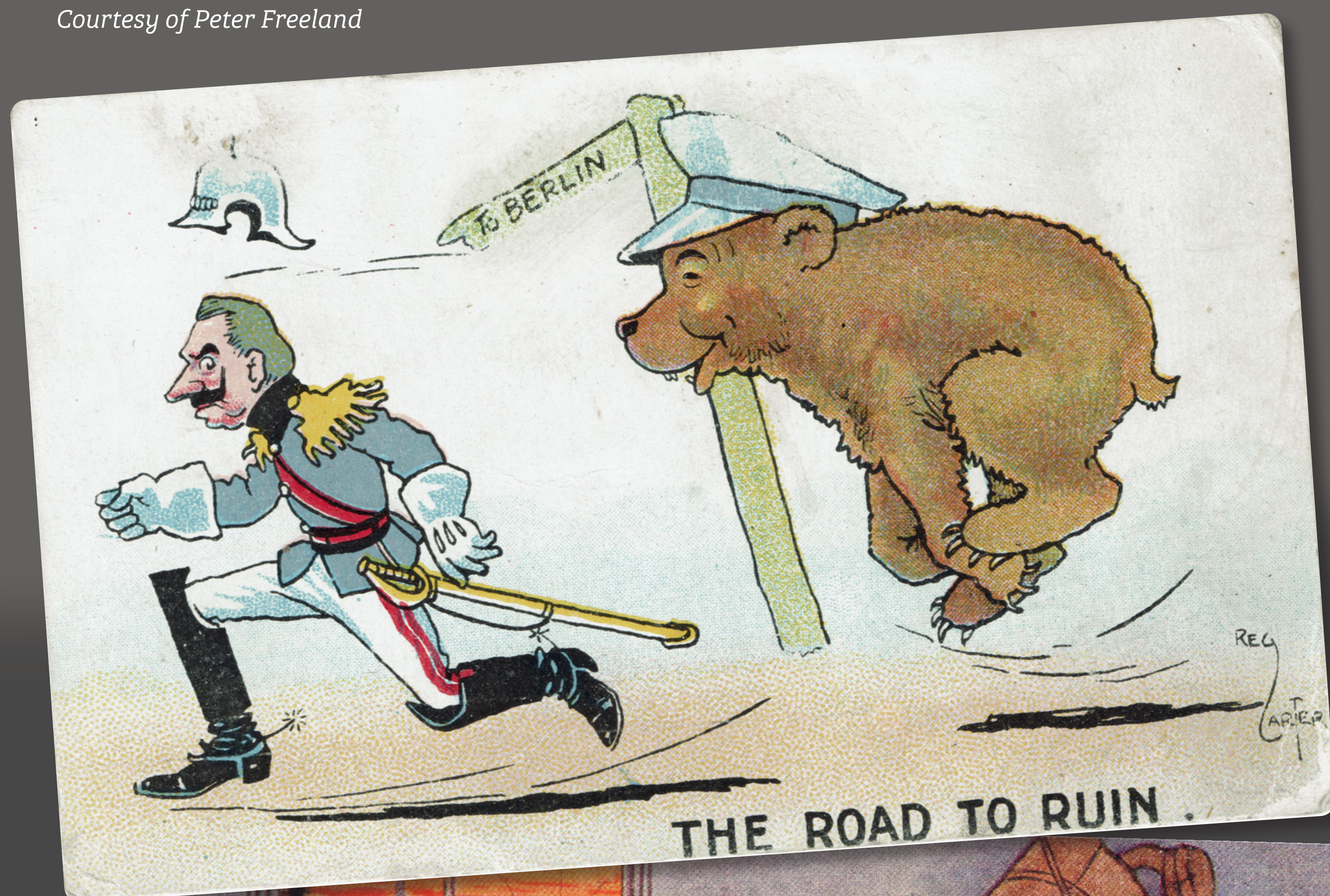
DORA introduced many things during the war, such as reduced pub opening times, rationing in 1918, and bonfires and whistling in the street were banned. Loitering near bridges and tunnels was also banned, as was flying kites. To maximise working hours in the day, particularly for those working in agriculture, DORA introduced British Summer Time in May 1916. It also made the possession of cocaine and opium a criminal offence for the first time.

One of the biggest changes brought in by DORA was it became an offence to publish any information which could be used directly or indirectly by the enemy. This included any information that could cause conflict between the military authorities and the public. Even letters written by the troops to their friends and families were read and censored by the government.

Although the troops could not always say what they wanted to say in their correspondence, they could still communicate some of their feelings using the many satirical postcards that were available during the war. One of the popular postcard illustrators of the war was Reg Carter. Before the war he had contributed illustrations to Ally Sloper's Half Holiday and other comic papers. During the war Reg served in the Royal Field Artillery, where he also produced his satirical postcards. In 1928 he started working for the Mickey Mouse Weekly, and in 1937 when DC Thompson launched The Beano, Reg drew the cover feature "Big Eggo". He continued to contribute to The Beano until his death in 1949.

A selection of First World War Postcards. Many of which would have been on sale for the troops to buy in the YMCA Hut in Crowborough Camp.

Courtesy of Peter Freeland



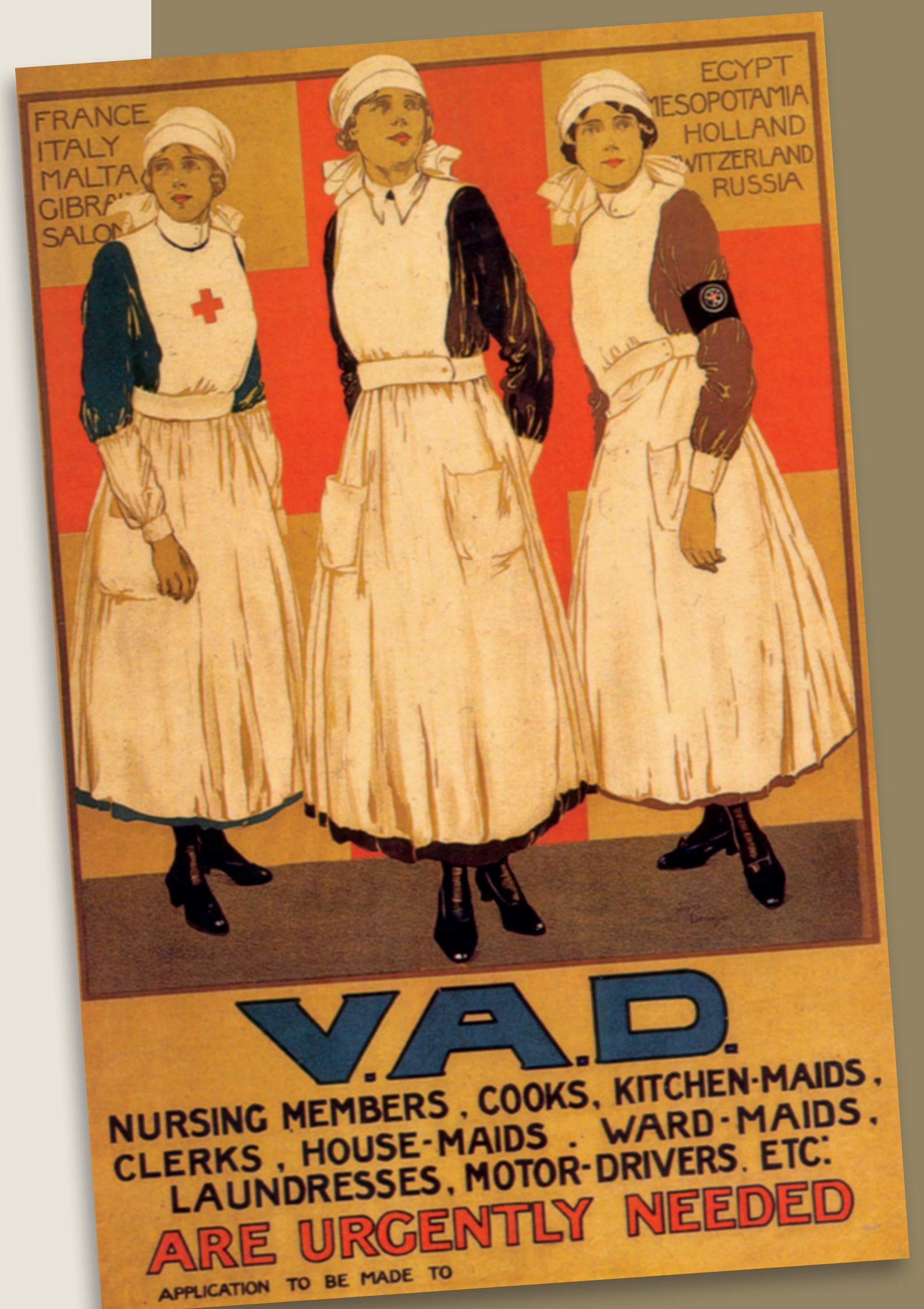
VOLUNTARY AID DETACHMENT

The VAD was founded in 1909 by the Red Cross and the Order of St John following the end of the Boer War, after the War Office became concerned that the medical and nursing services would not cope with another war. Both male and female detachments were set up to fill certain gaps in the Territorial medical services. By early 1914, 1757 female detachments and 519 male detachments had been registered with the War Office.

During the First World War over 3,000 VAD auxiliary hospitals were set up across the country in town halls, junior schools and large and small private houses. They were usually staffed by a Commandant who was in charge of the hospital, a Quartermaster who was responsible for the provision store, a Matron in charge of the nursing staff, two trained nurses and VAD nurses. There were also male roles such as orderlies and ambulance drivers, and some paid roles such as cooks.

In many cases it was local women who became VAD nurses, and who were usually either too young or too old to work in military hospitals. They had to work towards certificates in Home Nursing and First Aid within the first 12 months of joining, and learned to bandage, do simple dressings, and were taught the basics of “invalid cookery and hygiene”. They were also responsible for most of the basic work such as cleaning, dusting, cooking breakfasts, lighting fires and doing the laundry. Another of their duties was helping to dress, undress and wash the male patients, a big step for many of the younger nurses, who had never been alone with a man who wasn’t her brother or father before.

The patients at VAD hospitals did not generally have life threatening injuries and just needed time to convalesce. Servicemen preferred these auxiliary hospitals to military hospitals, as they were less strict, less crowded and the conditions were more homely. Local residents would also organise entertainments for the patients, and held various fundraising events to raise money to buy comforts for the convalescing soldiers such as cigarettes, chocolate and Christmas presents!



VAD Recruitment Poster



A cartoon postcard depicting a soldier wearing “Hospital Blues”. This uniform of a red tie and blue jacket was the uniform for wounded men, and was intended to maintain a sense of military discipline among the convalescing troops, and also to allow the troops to be easily recognised as a man who had “done his bit” when walking around the town.

WALSH MANOR VAD

In November 1914 rumours began in Crowborough that Walsh Manor was to be converted into a VAD Hospital for wounded soldiers. It was not unusual for private homes to be acquired by the VAD for this purpose. Despite the rumours, Walsh Manor was not actually up and running until February 1915, when they admitted several patients from the hutments at Brown Knoll.

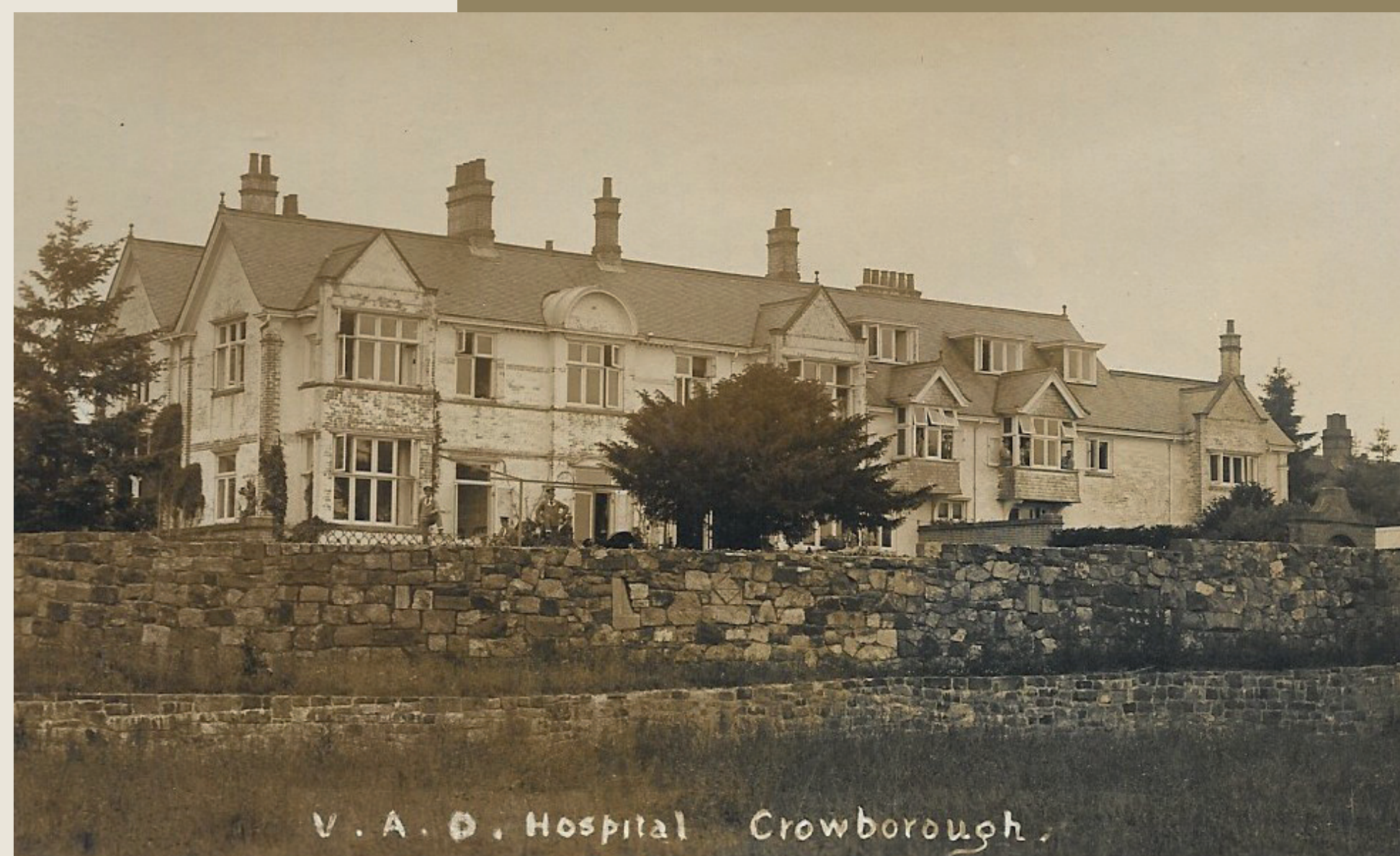
Initially the hospital could accommodate 20 patients at any time and was set up to receive the sick and wounded soldiers from Crowborough Camp. It was staffed by a Matron, two trained nurses, one housemaid and two cooks, all of whom lived on site at the Hospital. They were also supported by a number of VAD nurses and staff from VAD Sussex 46 Division, and male division Sussex 17. In its first year, Walsh Manor treated over 170 patients.

Many of the VAD nurses and staff who worked at Walsh Manor lived in the local area. Nora Fellowes of Beacon Gardens started as a volunteer, before reaching the rank of Sister. Rosa Gertrude Parris of Oaklands, Jarvis Brook, was a VAD Staff Nurse, obtaining one stripe and her five years' service medal. Although she moved to Harecombe Manor VAD in 1917, she was forced to give up her duties in 1918 due to ill health. Hilda Barbrook, from Ingleside, Crowborough was a Probationer in the Wards, and later at Harecombe Manor she was a Pantry and Kitchen Maid. Her sister Lilian Barbrook was a Ward Maid. Local men also worked at Walsh Manor such as Ernest Southon of The Cross, Crowborough, who was a VAD Sussex 17 Night Orderly.

By the Summer of 1915, Crowborough Camp had created its own field hospital, which was under the control of Lieutenant Fox of the Royal Army Medical Corps. It was also not unusual for civilians to be admitted to the Camp Hospital. In August 1915 a male visitor to the town was admitted to the Camp Hospital after being shot at a civilian shooting range.

Walsh Manor was closed in December 1916, with many of the staff transferring to the new VAD hospital at Harecombe Manor. However Walsh Manor did continue to be used for nursing training courses into 1917.

Walsh Manor VAD Hospital. Some of the patients can be seen in the grounds wearing their "Hospital Blues".



A group of wounded soldiers and nurses outside Walsh Manor.

Images courtesy of Paul Adams.

SOLDIERS STORIES

JOHN "JACK" HOWARD TROY

Jack was born in Mount Hisarlik, now called Tinkerpot Place, Stone Cross Crowborough in December 1895. He was the second youngest of eight children. His father, William Troy, was the estate manager for Miss Emma Wolfe of High Broom, Stone Cross. He went to King Charles' School in Tunbridge Wells, and went on to study at Uckfield Agricultural College. When war broke out in 1914, Jack volunteered for the 5th Cinque Ports Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment.

During the War he served in every major battle in France, an achievement he was said to be very proud of. He was a runner for some of his service, and was awarded the Military Medal for disarming a German look-out post. One of his most enduring memories was the dreadful legendary Flanders mud. He remembered the Scottish soldiers whose uniform included kilts. The mud and water was so deep that their kilts floated out around them.

Like many veterans of the First World War he didn't talk very much about his war experiences. In the 1960s, when the first programmes about the War began to appear on television showing original footage of the front lines, he was able to point out former comrades and named them. However he tended to be withdrawn for the rest of his life.

After the war, Jack married Madge Tomsett whose family ran the general stores in School Lane, in Crowborough. The name is still on the side of the building. They lived in Battle Cottage on Crowborough Hill which was built for them when they got married. Jack worked as a nurseryman for the rest of his life, owning extensive nurseries, mainly on Crowborough Hill. He died in 1969.

Information and images courtesy of Chantal Wilson as part of the Family Connections Project.

Jack with a group of other soldiers at the end of the War.



John "Jack" Howard Troy



Photograph of Jack taken in December 1914 after enlisting. The photo shows him with the other soldiers in his billet in Hastings. Jack is the first man kneeling on the right.



Postcard sent by Jack on 4th December 1914 after enlisting.



ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

Arthur Conan Doyle moved to Crowborough in 1909, and lived in the town until his death in 1930. He lived at Windlesham Manor with his second wife Jean Leckie, and their three children Denis, Adrian and Lena. He also had two children from his first marriage to Louisa Hawkins; Mary and Arthur, known as Kingsley. Conan Doyle was originally a doctor, but in 1887 he published “A Study in Scarlet” introducing the world to his iconic character Sherlock Holmes.

When war broke out Conan Doyle attempted to enlist claiming, “I am fifty five but I am strong and hardy, and can make my voice audible at great distances, which is useful at drill”. His offer was declined. Instead he set about establishing a voluntary corps of men who would defend the country against invasion. Despite initial reluctance from the War Office, the Crowborough Volunteer Training Corps would be the first of its kind across the country.

Conan Doyle was part of the secretive War Propaganda Bureau, producing various pamphlets promoting Britain’s interests during the war, alongside some of the biggest literary names of the time. He also campaigned to improve the safety of the British troops and made eerily accurate predictions about the war. He went on various trips to the front lines and visited the troops, experiencing the conditions first hand.

Back at home, Lady Conan Doyle helped to organise a home for the Belgian refugees at Hurtis Hill near their family home, and they regularly held dinners for the Canadian Officers. Conan Doyle is also said to have sent secret messages to British Prisoners of War in Germany, by sending them copies of his books with a series of pin pricks through certain letters in the text. These would spell out war news and stories of interest from home.

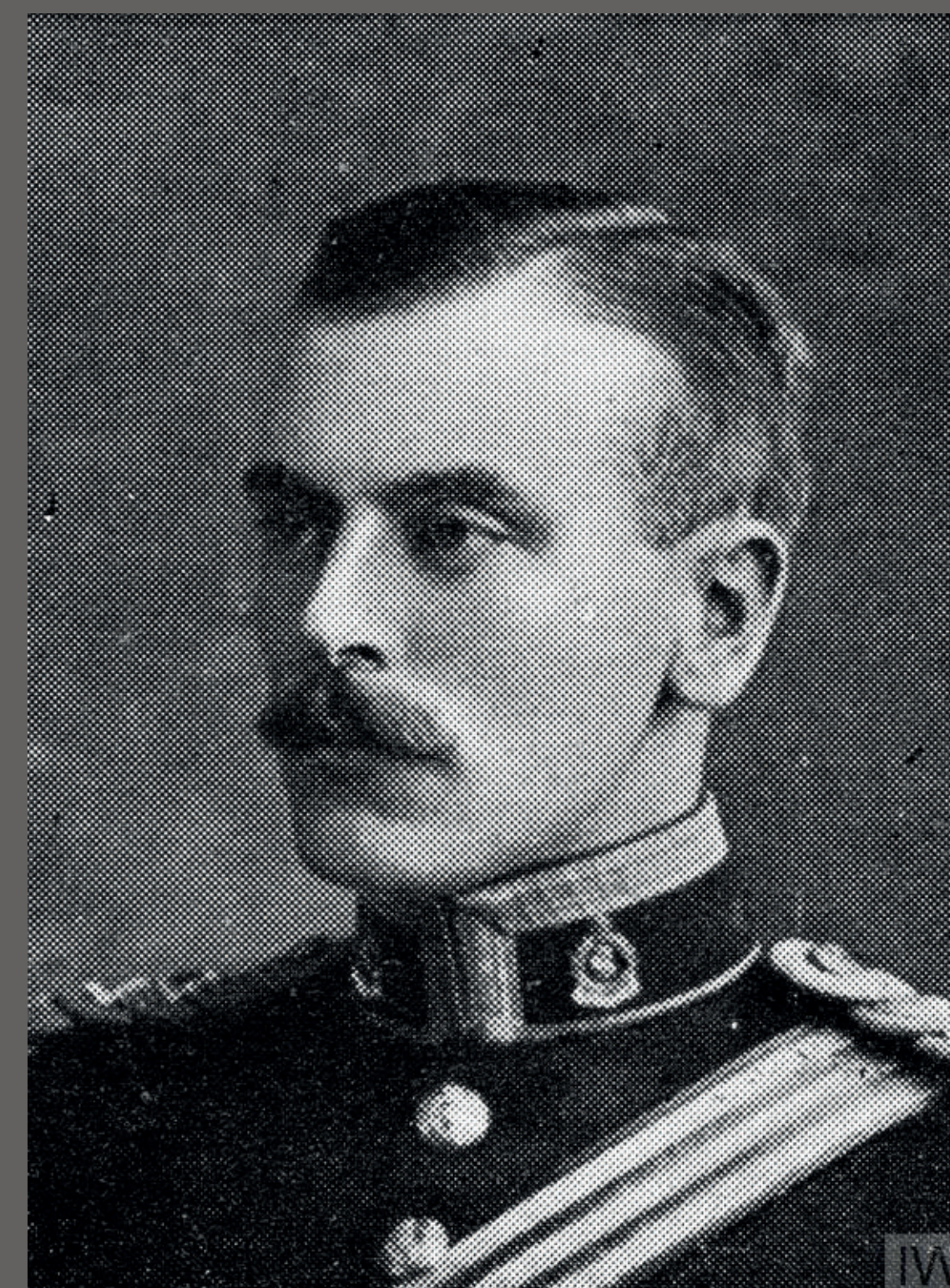
Despite an apparent enthusiasm for the war, his family also shared in the sadness and loss. His wife’s brother, Captain Malcolm Leckie was killed in action at the start of the war in August 1914, and he lost his eldest son Kingsley in October 1918.



Arthur Conan Doyle with his second wife Jean and their three children.
The Arthur Conan Doyle Encyclopaedia.



Captain A.A Kingsley Conan Doyle, Arthur Conan Doyle’s son who died in October 1918.



Captain Malcolm Leckie. Royal Army Medical Corps attached to the 1st Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers.

Imperial War Museum

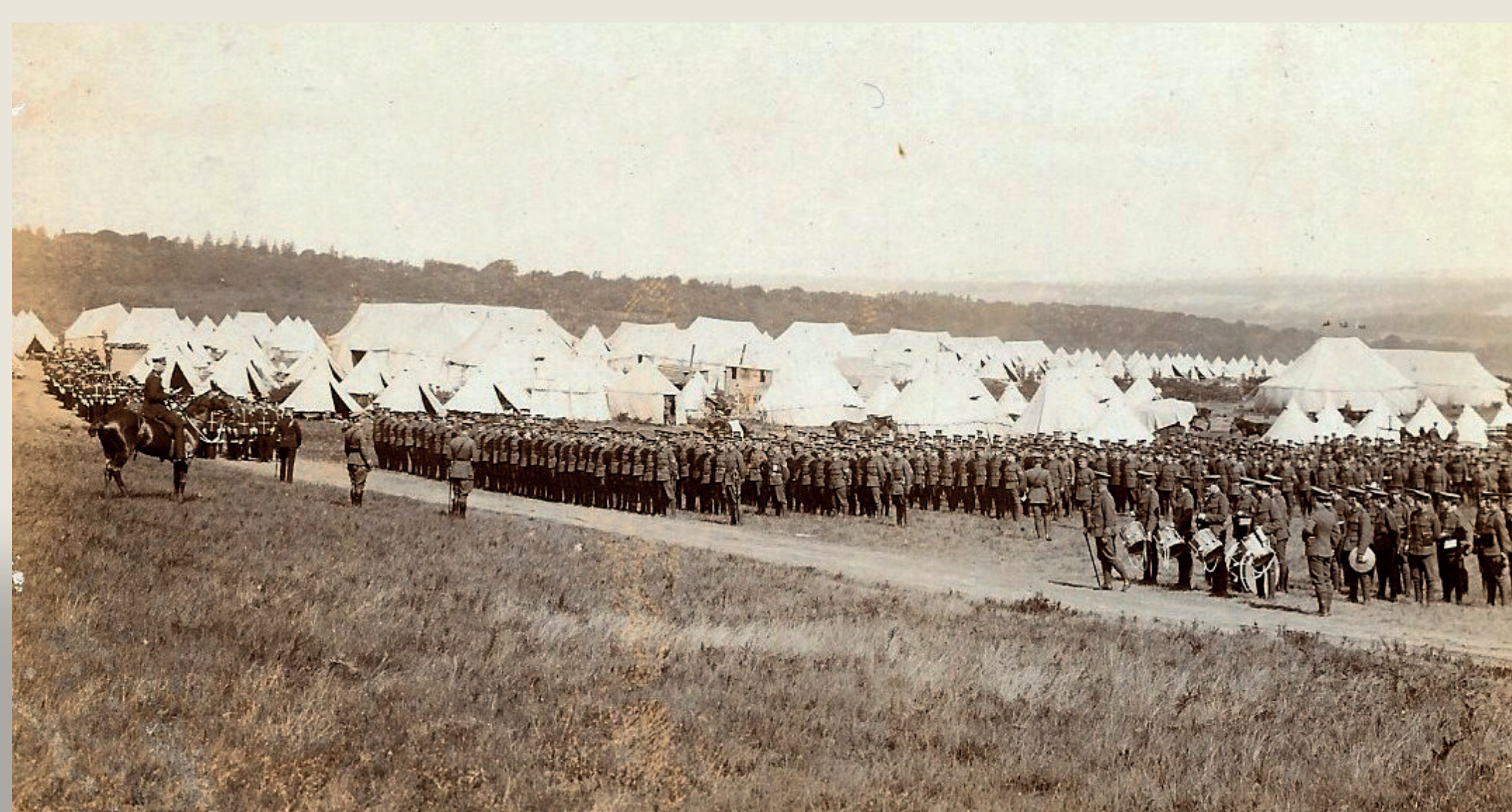
ST JOHN'S COMMON TRAINING CAMP

Before the First World War, Crowborough was already very accustomed to military activities in the town. St John's Common was regularly used to host large military camps during July and August each year. In July 1908 for example, 60 officers and 600 men of the 12th, 20th and 23rd Brigades of the Royal Field Artillery, camped on the Common while training for manoeuvres in Ashdown Forest.

In 1906, 2000 men of the 1st Cinque Ports Rifle Corps held their annual training camp at the Common, and the Sussex and Kent Volunteers Brigade, and the Royal Engineers were there in 1910. Between 8th July and 23rd July 1911 the Royal Sussex Regiment trained in Ashdown Forest, at the same time as the London Territorial Camp was held, with 3,500 men at St John's Common and 7,000 at Camp Hill.

The Territorial Forces also held camps on the Common. They paid the Conservators of Ashdown Forest £4 for the use of the land. In July and August 1912, they welcomed over 1400 men and 800 horses. A group of YMCA volunteers would also set up tents next to these summer camps to provide refreshments for the soldiers.

The Defence of the Realm Act 1914 specified that land could be used for military training, so after the war was declared it was decided that Crowborough would be a good location for a training camp. Plans were quickly made to establish permanent camps at St John's Common and in the "Crow and Gate District", which would eventually become Crowborough Camp. Initially troops lived in tents, however as summer gave way to the harshness of winter, a mass hut building scheme was launched. By the end of November 1914, the Courier reported that the camp at St John's Common was almost deserted, and the few men left behind were to be transferred to huts at Little Warren Farm.



This shows the large pre-war Territorial Forces Camps that appeared every summer on St John's Common.

Images courtesy of Paul Adams.



Territorial Forces soldiers under canvas on the Common.



This photo shows the early encampments at St John's Common in September 1914.



The Royal Field Artillery Camp 1908. This photo shows the Royal Artillery Drivers returning to the Common after watering their horses at the mill pond.

CROWBOROUGH’S ROLL OF HONOUR

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

Sidney Hugh Adams

John Henry Thomas Allcorn

Cecil Arnold

A. Awcock

W.V Awcock

Frederick Ernest Bailey

W. Baker

C. Baldock

Stanley Clifford Baldock

Thomas Ernest Baldwin

Owen Barnes

G.A Bartup

Albert Beard

Leonard George Beard

W. Bennett

Ernest Alfred Berry

W.R Berwick

William George Biggs

A.J Bishop

Henry.G Blyth

B. Blackford

Charles Boarer

Walter Boarer

Hercules Booker

Joseph. Booker

J W Booker

Wilfred Bolton

Fred Bridger

A. Brooman

James Brooman

Ezra James Brown

Jesse Buck

L.R Buick

Robin Buick

H.G Bull

George Washington Camfield

Stanley James Neel Care

W. Carr

Frederick George Causley

J.W Chaplin

F. Charlton

J. Cheesman

George Colbran

A.J Coleman

Roger Cordy – Simpson

Charles Samuel Joseph Cornford

T. Ernest Thomas Cornford

H. Cowley

A.S Cramp

John Crittall

A.H.P Cruickshank

George Dadswell

John David Dadswell

Francis Randolph De Morney

A.A.K.C Doyle

C.J Drage

Alfred Dray

Richard Dray

Arthur Edgar Edwards

Sebert Henry Robert Eyre

Henry Faircloth

John Forward

William Henry Fossey

Edward John French

Ernest Fry

G. Fuller

J.E Gallard

Ernest Gander

Percy Albert Gander

John Ernest Gilbert

George Goble

H. Goble

Arthur Goodacre

Frederick William Goodacre

James Goldsmith

William Charles Goldsmith

R. Watson Griffin

A Harman

M. Hazelden

J. Heasman

W. Heasman

David Hemsley

J.S Hemsley

L.J Hemsley

Spencer Harold Hemsley

Alick Henshaw

H. Henshaw

William Frederick Henshaw

Arthur Hill

Harold Hill

W.J Hoadley

Maurice Hoare

Alfred Springate Hoath

F.J Hoath

Richard Leslie Hoath

A. Hobbs

F. Hobbs

George Walter Hodges

James Eli Hodges

Samuel Joseph Hodges

Vernon Holden

Charles William Holmwood

Fred Hyder

J.H Hyder

John Frederick Izzard

Alfred JamesJarrett

Edward Jarrett

Henry William Jeffery

H. Jenner

Charles Albert Jennings

F. Jennings

E.D Job

Bertie Jones

W. Kay

D. Kingsbury

William Latter

Malcolm Leckie

Rev Herbet Peter Ledbitter

M. Leslie

H. Lester

P. Luxford

Charles Mackellow

Arthur Kirkpatrick Maclean

When the Crowborough War Memorial was unveiled in August 1920 it carried the names of 188 local men who fell during the First World War. This number grew to over 200 names in the years that followed. As we approach the 100th Anniversary of the Armistice, the Crowborough Festival remembers these brave men who never came home, as well as those who did survive, and returned to Crowborough forever haunted by what they had experienced, the injuries they had sustained, and the friends they had lost.

*“At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We Will Remember Them”.*

C.W.E Mason
Charles May
Godfrey Middlemiss
G. W Middlemiss
F.A Middleton
F. Miller
Oswald Thomas Monckton
Albert Moore
A. Morley
Amos Neve
Albert Edward Neve
Frank Norton
Arthur Gerald Onslow
Brian Walton Onslow
Milo Richard Beaumont Onslow
Fred Ovenden
H. Ovenden
Walter Ovenden
Sidney William Page-Mitchell
C.J Paine
J. Parker
William David Pitt
Ernest Pitts
John Edward Pollington
Owen William Pollington
Benjamin Richard Pratt
Henry Price
W.W Ralph
Albert Frederick Ransom
William Alec Ransom
R.D Randel
E.G Richards
Percy Edgar Riddles
Eric Samuel Ridley
V. Ridley
William Charles Victor Ridley
William Kelly Saunders
E.J Shepherd
T. Simmons
J. Sivers
Charles Smith

Sydney Newman Smith
Walter Smith
Jesse Southon
William George Southon
W.R Squires
George Stephens
John Stevenson
Arnold John Ward Strange
Albert Edward Sweetman
Ernest Sweetman
E. Taylor
Frank William Taylor
H.J Taylor
John Taylor
Mark Taylor
E. Tester
E. Titchener
P. Tomsett
C.W Trousdale
C. Verrall
Ernest Walters
Reginald S Walters
Bernard Wardley
R. L Watson
Harold Cuthbert Welfare
Frederick George Weller
Charles Wenham
W. Wescombe
Frank Weston
George Horace Weston
H. John Weston
John Dobree Durell Wickham
Lister Durell Wickham
C. Williams
J. Williamson
William Lee Wilmshurst
Fred Winter
Frank W Winter
Harry Turk Wrightson



Captain A. A. Kingsley
Conan Doyle



Captain Malcolm Leckie



Private Fred Bailey



Private James Eli Hodges



ARMISTICE

The Armistice was signed at 5am on the 11th November 1918 and began at 11am, the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. It was an agreement to end the fighting between France, Germany and Britain, and was followed by six months of peace negotiations which resulted in the signing of the peace treaty or “The Treaty of Versailles”.

The signing of the Armistice agreement took place in a railway carriage in the Forest of Compiègne, north of Paris. Twenty two years later in 1940 Adolf Hitler used the same railway carriage when he forced France to surrender to Germany during the Second World War.

In the Armistice agreement Germany was ordered to give up her heavy guns, field guns, and machine guns as well as her aeroplanes and submarines. Germany was also requested to give up a number of warships and to disarm the ones she was allowed to keep. These requests were to ensure Germany could not restart the war and therefore break the agreement. If Germany had broken any of the Armistice terms, hostilities between the nations would have begun again within two days.

The Armistice agreement and the Treaty of Versailles also forced Germany to accept the blame for the First World War, including the loss of millions of lives. Germany was made to pay reparations for the damage caused, which was estimated to be approximately £22 billion. This war debt was finally paid off in 2010 with a final payment of £59 million.

In Crowborough the news of the Armistice was received shortly before 11am, on the 11th November 1918. Local residents displayed Union Jack flags and other national emblems from shop windows, private residences and flag staffs, and although the local children indulged in marches, sang patriotic songs and waved Union Jack flags, Crowborough marked this day in a quiet way.

Troops at Crowborough Camp were given a day's holiday and a spirit of “restrained cheerfulness and thankfulness” was observed. The bells were rung at the Parish Church and in the evening the local Picture House was well attended. On the following morning a thanksgiving service was held at the Camp and then the troops were free for the rest of the day.



Armistice Day 1924. Veterans assemble at The Cross and prepare to march to the War Memorial.



St John's School Children celebrating the end of the War.
Images courtesy of Paul Adams.



CELEBRATING PEACE

Despite the Armistice being signed in November 1918, Peace was not officially celebrated until the following year. The Government decided that the 19th July 1919 should be a Public Holiday for celebrating the end of the war, and was to be observed across Britain. Soon committees were set up across the country to plan Peace Day victory parades and celebrations.

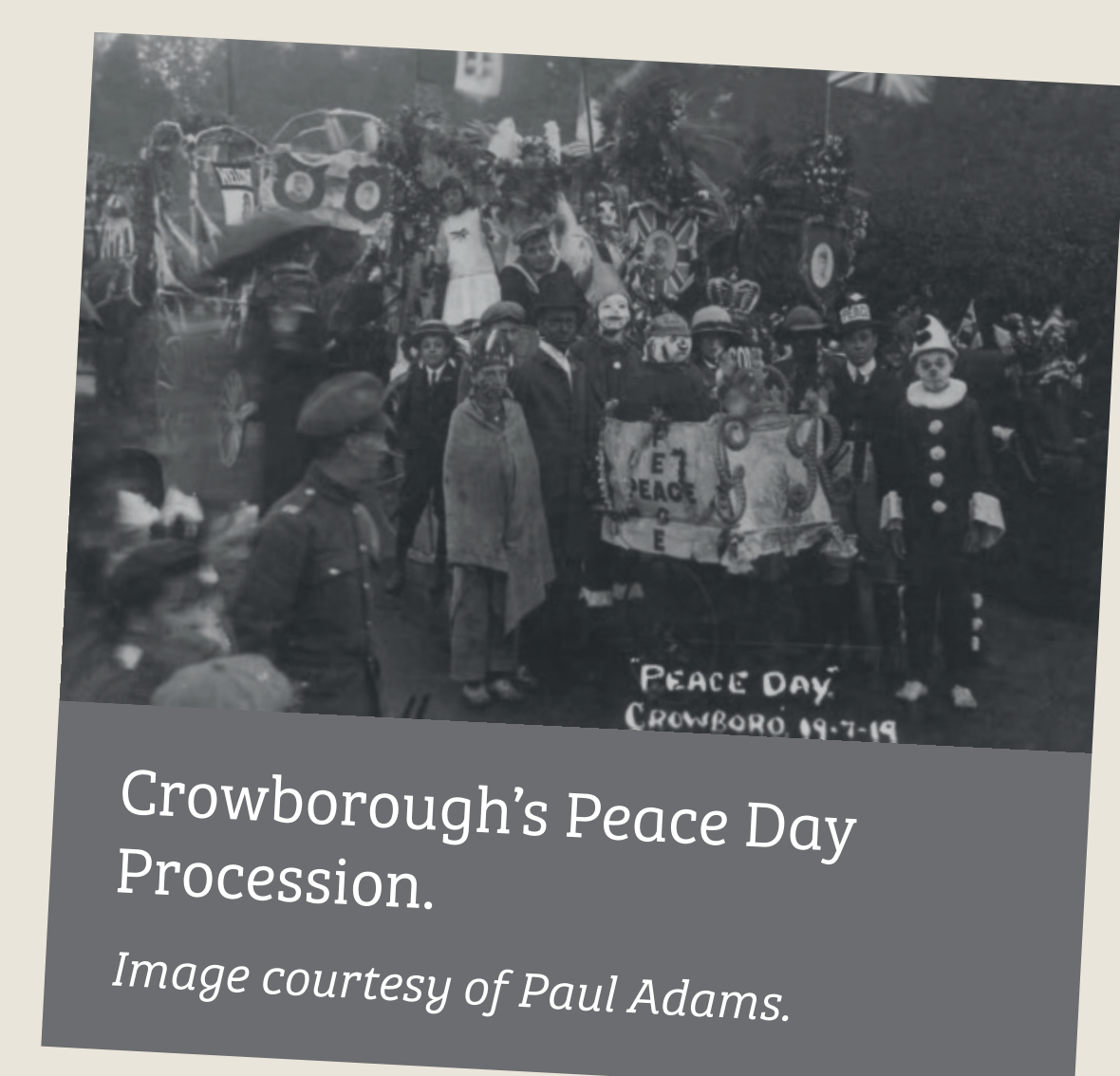
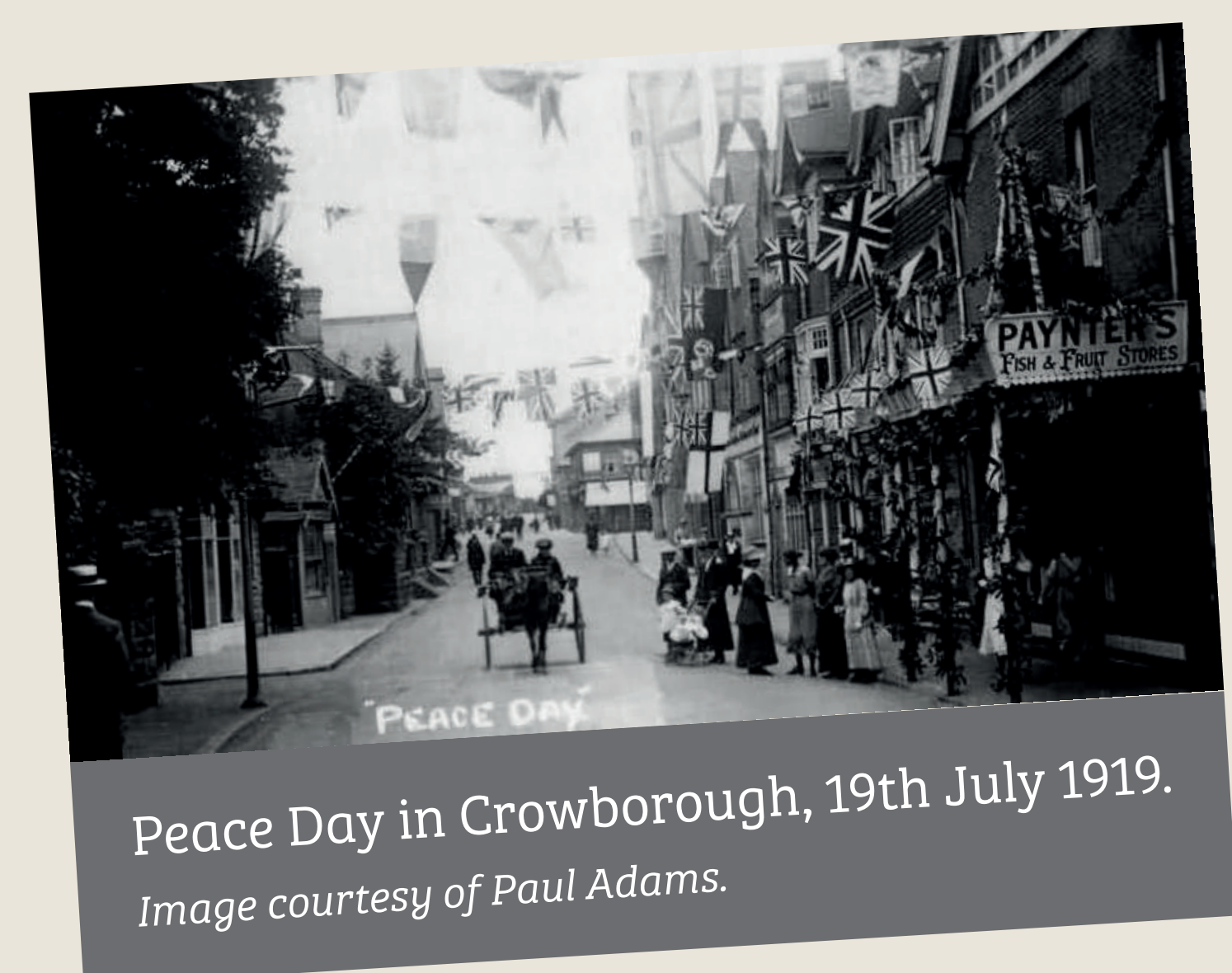
In Crowborough the Peace Day celebrations included a children's procession from Chapel Green at 2pm, and in the evening a fancy dress carnival and procession. At 10.30pm a bonfire was lit as part of the Peace Bonfires, where beacons and bonfires were lit across the country on Peace Night. On "Peace Sunday" thanksgiving services were held in every Crowborough Church, and in the evening an open-air multi-denominational service was held on Chapel Green.

A few weeks later at the start of August, Crowborough also hosted a Welcome Home day for local ex-servicemen who had returned from the fronts. Over 400 ex-servicemen attended. The welcome began with a short service on Chapel Green just after midday. After the service the veterans and the crowds made their way to the field adjoining The Grange, while the Crowborough Silver Band played music along the route.

Lunch was held in the field in three large marquees, served by a group of local volunteers. The substantial menu was much appreciated, as were the "smokes". Major Wood thanked the residents of Crowborough for the generous welcome they had given the ex-servicemen, and said they had also appreciated what the people of Crowborough and district had done for them while they were serving at the Front.

Throughout the afternoon musical selections were played by the Band, and more entertainment was provided by Miss Tuppen's Concert Party from Brighton. At 5.30pm tea was served in the marquee, followed by more "smokes". In the evening the Grange Cricket Ground hosted a dance for the ex-servicemen and their families.

The following day the widows and families of Crowborough's fallen men were invited to a meal at the Oddfellows' Hall.



SOLDIERS STORIES

EDGAR ALLAN YOUNG

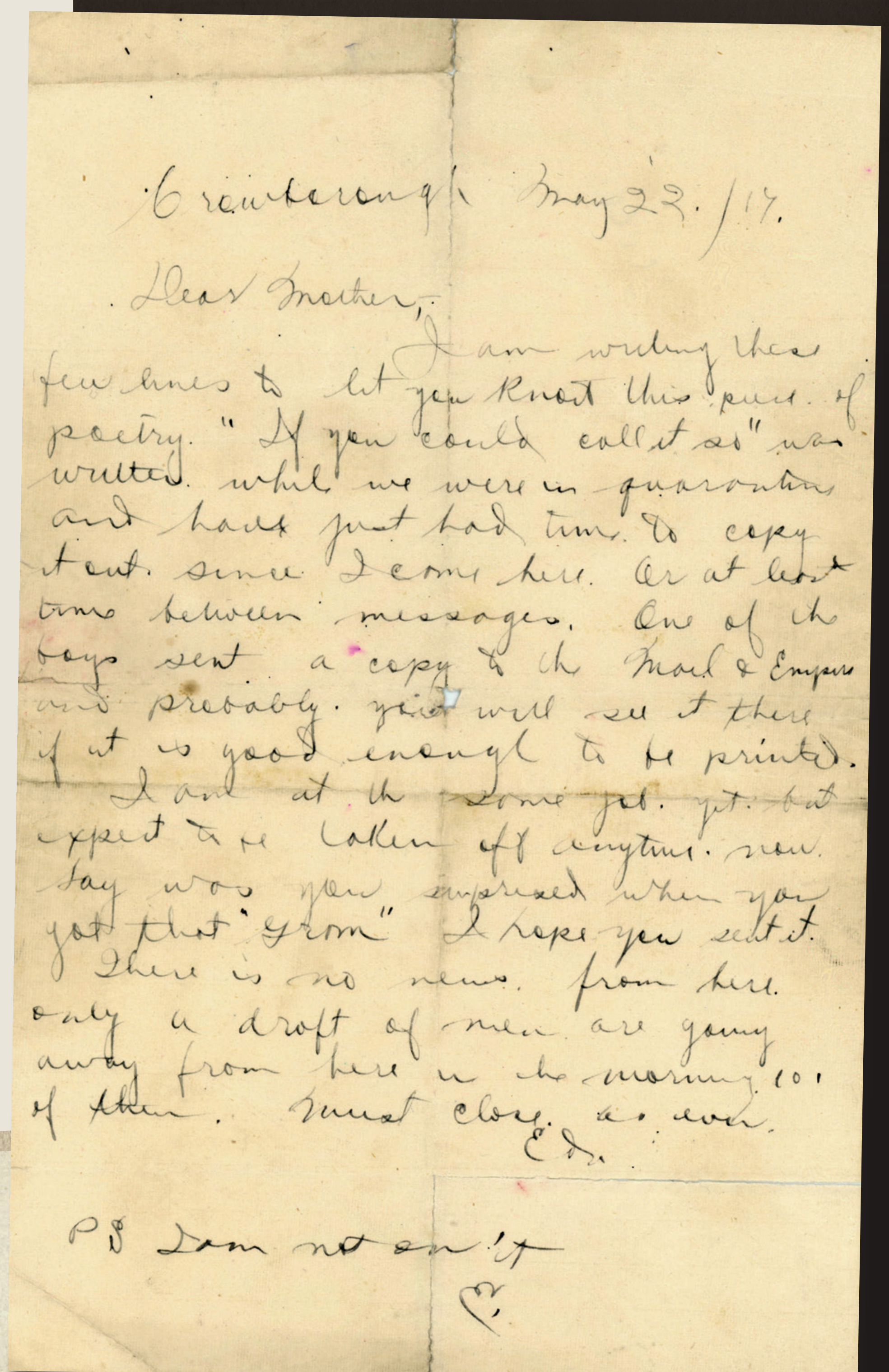
Edgar Allan Young, born 25 June 1898 on his parent's farm in rural Hibbert Township, Perth County, Ontario, Canada, was the eldest child of his parents, Charles Young (1861-1922) and Mary Margaret Clara Young (1870-1969). They were second cousins, both the grandchildren of brothers who had emigrated from Yorkshire, England to Ontario in the 1830s. At just 17 years of age, Allan, eager to escape the drudgery of farm work for the excitement of foreign battlefields, enlisted in January 1916 during the recruitment drive of the local county regiment – the 110th (Perth) Battalion. Hundreds of volunteers from the towns, villages and farms of Perth County responded in late 1915 through mid-1916.

On the last day of October that same year a compliment of 679 officers and men of the 110th Perth embarked for Great Britain on SS Caronia, landing eleven days later. The battalion immediately moved to South Camp, Seaford in East Sussex before moving 20 miles north to Crowborough just days before Christmas. On December 28th, 'Eddie', as he was now known by his new comrades, transferred to the Canadian Engineer Training Depot (CETD) for training with the Signal Service, followed by his assignment with the 3rd Canadian Division Signal Company in mid-June 1917 in France, just before his 19th birthday. Other than 14 days of leave to England granted in August 1918, this young soldier served till the remainder of the war on the grim battlefields of France and Belgium. In March 1919 he left Liverpool on the SS Cedric landing at Halifax on the 29th, and demobilized just three days later at Toronto before boarding a train home to Perth County.

During the Second World War Allan was asked to manage the engine shop at London's Crumlin Airport, which were turning out mosquito bombers for the war effort. His son served with the Royal Canadian Navy on a minesweeper at D-Day. Allan lived and worked the rest of his life in London, Ontario, dying at the age of 79 almost 62 years to the day after he enlisted for the Great War.



Edgar Allan Young.



A letter written by Edgar to his mother back in Ontario, Canada.

Edgar's mother Mary Margaret Clara Young.



Images courtesy of Stephen Young